TRACER

McHENRY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AN ILLINOIS CORPORATION (not for profit)

6422 Main Street, Union, Illinois 60180

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GOOD NEWS.

Haven't you often thought newspapers would be more interesting if they would begin with the nice items first, instead of tucking them away in the back? We thought you might like an interesting, pleasant story to begin with, and here is one furnished by our accessioning chairman, Alice Clark. It is titled "Interesting Gift of Books".

The number of items donated to the Historical Society has lessened with the closing of the Museum for the Winter. However, gifts trickle in. One of the most interesting accessioned recently was a box of old schoolbooks donated by Mrs. Llewellyn Begun of Hebron. While most of the books had been used by children of the Johnson family in the early 1900s. some of them date back to the 1800s. To name a few, there were STEPPING STONES TO LITERATURE, 1887, OUR BODIES AND HOW WE LIVE, 1896, and CYR'S FIFTH READER, 1899. A few which appeared even older had their copyright dates missing. These old books are very interesting and the Society is grateful to receive them.

The Museum has long thought a bee and honey exhibit would be good to have since the great bee keeper and author, Dr. Charles Miller was a Marengo resident. Now another Marengo doctor, Dr. Emerson Kunde, is donating Dr. Miller's book, Fifty Years Among the Bees to the Museum, which has also been the recipient of bee equipment: one bee hive body, some brood frames to fit in, a queen excluder, super honey comb boxes, and a smoker.

MORE THINGS OF INTEREST.

At the January meeting of the County Historical Society, President Dorothy McEachren announced that Mrs. Olive Nolan of Woodstock has been appointed chairman of the Genealogical Research Committee. Mrs. Nolan has been serving as our researcher for some months, spending hours at the County Courthouse endeavoring to find answers to the many questions from persons all over the country whose "roots" are in McHenry County. So far, Mrs. Nolan IS the committee. If you have free time, and would be interested in helping her, please phone 338-0517 to volunteer your aid.

ALSO IN THE GENEALOGY FIELD.

Alice and Leta Clark have just completed the course in genealogy offered by the McHenry County College. Our work with membership and accessioning at the Museum prohibits us from becoming members of Mrs. Nolan's committee, although we hope to spend any spare time researching our own family history. We have tried for years without success to learn more about our Clark background. William Clark, our great grandfather came to Ringwood, Illinois, sometime prior to 1850. The McHenry County Census for that year lists William, 67; his wife, Almira, 50; a son, Lewis, 17; and a daughter, Helen, 16. (Our own grandfather, Philander, was not mentioned. By the 1860 Census. Lewis was married and had three children. County marriage records show that he married a Julia Morey on July 4, 1854. Helen was not listed in the 1860 Census, but the County records show that a Helen Clark married a Mathias P. Butler on September 21st, 1867. Our family has not been aware of the existence of Lewis and Helen (our great uncle and aunt) until we found their names in the census lists. Where they went, what became of them, we are anxious to know. If we can contact their descendants, perhaps they will be a source of information concerning our mutual ancestry. But how can we find them? Will our readers help?

Since more members of our organization become interested in tracing their own family histories all the time, perhaps this would be a good place to insert the information given in "Historically Speaking", the account of the Eleventh Annual Congress of the state's historical societies, in September. In their book column, they list Jeane Eddy Westin's "Finding Your Roots", which is an account of how every American can trace his ancestors, both at home and abroad. Miss Clark told us, too, that Leona Sederhola, one of our faithful docents who staff the Museum during the summer months, also took the course in Genealogy at the college this fall.

ITEMS ABOUT HISTORICAL HOUSES.

The old Ostend Schoolhouse which formed the nucleus of the Ostend community (Winter, 1977 Tracer) has recently been purchased by Bill and Kim Sanatowics who are doing extensive remodeling of the interior. They have torn out both the ten foot ceiling and the old thirteen foot ceiling and all the partitions which were put in at the time the building was transformed into a dwelling about a quarter of a century ago. The main floor will be an open area with a twelve foot wide space left for a bedroom which will be reached via ladder.

The Sanatowics are deeply interested in the history of their new home. By studying the 1862 and the 1872 maps of McHenry County, it was determined that the school was built sometime during that decade. The old 1862 map which Horace Wagner (one of our members) found in the walls of an old house in Wonder Lake show the location of the old log school half a mile west of its present location. In Harvard, Vivian and Jim Jackowski, who bought the Lake house on Hart boulevard two years ago, have plans for only one architectural change. They plan to enlarge the kitchen in a year or so. This will be done by stealing some space from the library. Most of what they have done so far, has been repair work. Albert Butts had built the house for James Lake in 1903, with M. A. Stafford being the architect, and George Lake retained everything as his parents had had them, keeping much the same colors each time he redecorated. The Jackowskis have made changes there. When the dining room ceiling had to be replaced,

they redecorated the dark green room with yellow and white.

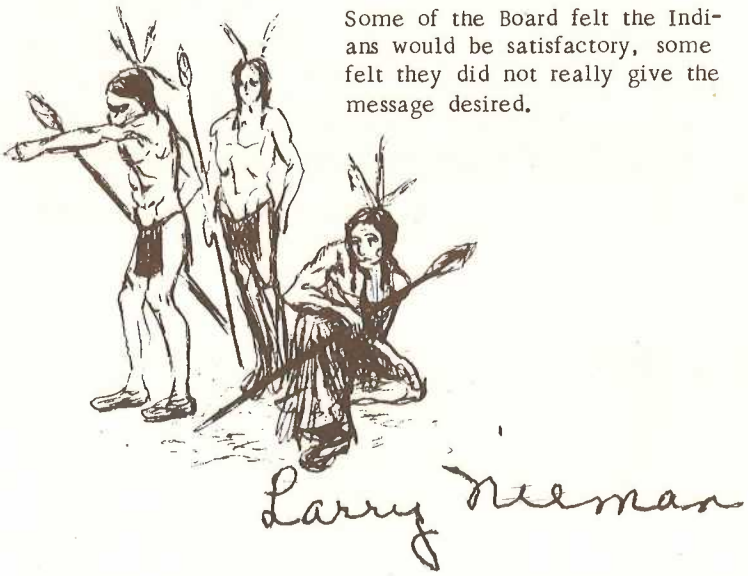
Nice to know that many of the older houses in our county are in the hands of interested and caring young people.

SUNDAY PROGRAMS.

During the winter a good many plans for the summer are instigated. Your Society's Board is planning to have programs in the Museum on Sunday afternoons through the summer. Several board members have already chosen what Sunday they will be responsible for and the programs so far have been quite varied. In the Spring Tracer we hope to give you a schedule. If anyone has an idea of something he--or she!--would like to see, a note to the Tracer would be very acceptable. All the Sundays, and all the Board members, are not yet programmed.

ALSO IN THE MAKING.

We have two other ideas germinating for the Tracer. The first has been stirring around for some time. When two board members attended a conference to gain what help they could from more experienced people, they were told that The Tracer's logo could be improved--that our magnifying glass is too static, that we need something that suggests motion. A number of McHenry County artists, and artists formerly of the county, have been contacted, but several have shown no interest in the project. Two sketches we received are shown below.



Some of the Board felt the Indians would be satisfactory, some felt they did not really give the message desired.

It was felt this would prove more of an advertisement of The Railroad Museum.

At the January meeting, Miss Alice Clark suggested that we have a contest among the high school art classes to see if we could find one that would be satisfactory to everyone. She offered to give a bond to the winner, and the Board voted she should go ahead with this plan. We will give you the results of this later also.

The other idea concerns the financing of The Tracer. There has been no charge, of course, for our newsletter, but the cost of issuing it is greater than it used to be and if the size was to be increased and pictures added, so, too, did the expense of the magazine. One of the possible ways of meeting the cost was to try a page of advertising. Before this could be done there had to be opinions gotten as to whether this would negate our "Not-for-profit" status; decisions had to be made as to what type of advertising we would carry; the price we would charge; and other, more trivial decisions. In this issue we are beginning. It was decided that only well-established firms would be allowed to advertise with us, and that we would accept only one advertisement from each town. As we go to press, we have not heard from all areas, but we will begin with the advertisements that have arrived. We will appreciate hearing from the membership their thoughts on this new page.

HELP WANTED.

Since the last sentence was a request for letters, this seems a good place to add some other "wants". From our membership chairman, Leta Clark, comes this appeal: Wanted: More representation from Woodstock and Crystal Lake! Since the great majority of our members live in these two areas, there should be more interested persons willing to serve on the Board of the Historical Society or willing to volunteer their time helping to prepare the Museum for its opening on May 1st. The display committee especially needs volunteers. Please call 923-2267 and offer your services.

Reminders were sent out in December to the many members who failed to pay their dues for the year ending May 31st, 1978. We have been pleased with the results with many paying for two or even three years in advance. Some included extra amounts as donations. Still, there are a number of persons who have overlooked paying their dues. Probably their reminders were lost in the Christmas rush. If you are one of these people, please send in your dues soon. We hate to lose you as a member, but our constitution states that persons who are delinquent six months should be dropped from the membership lists. Please check your records.

THINGS WANTED. .

More old desks are needed to make our school room look more authentic. Does anyone know of persons owning old desks who might be persuaded to part with them? We would especially like at least one old double desk of the type that two children shared.

Much desired is a 1912 history of Harvard. One of these came to light not long ago but the owner has no desire to give it away yet. Does anyone have one?

Also, we have had no answer on the request for information as to the donor of the wigs, Please?

We will also repeat here the need for help on the genealogical committee.

OBITUARIES.

Each quarter there is the sad business of reporting this type of news. The first person we mention today is Eugene Shaw of Union, who had been a valuable and valued member of the Historical Society. His sister has

made a memorial gift to the museum, but he would have been long remembered without that. Although his death occurred weeks ago, we wish to include him here.

The deaths of two older women are noted in this section today also. Margaret M. Donahue, formerly of Huntley, Chicago and Evanston, died on January 30th, 1977. She had had a long and interesting career with the Chicago Cubs. In 1919 she had gone to work as a secretary for the orgainization and stayed with them until her retirement. In 1927 she was elected Secretary of the Cubs; in 1950, she was elected vice president. She retired in 1958, after thirty-nine years with the clubs. She was eight-five years old at the time of her death, and again living in the county of her birth but at the Crystal Pines Nursing home at Crystal Lake. What a lot of interesting stories she could have told us!

The other lady was a very close link with the earliest days of white people in the Harvard area, as her mother was the first white girl born in Chemung Township. Elsie Roach died less than two weeks before her ninety-eighth birthday. She was the daughter of Oliver and Adelaide Butts Udell, two family names well known in the early days of the Harvard community. In 1907, she married Ernest Roach, and one son, two grandchildren and four great grandchildren are still Harvard residents.

We are the poorer, since these people are gone.

SCOUT REPORT.

At the November meeting, Ann Rademaker, the Board Secretary, and Nancy Petzelt her co-worker with the Girl Scout troop who had been working at the Museum, felt they should report the enthusiasm the girls displayed, and Ann made such a report. At that time, the girls had gone through all the old Bibles and taken the genealogies. They also worked on scrapbooks to acquire death information of McHenry County people. Another group went through all the small pieces of embroidery and cut work; this they retagged under the direction of Ramona Martin. Help from young people is to be valued "above rubies".

SPRING IS COMING.

Before the next issue of The Tracer, the marble season will be over and we have been holding this set of rules for "Ring Taw" for months, to have it for the right time of year. We do not have the name of the director who handed this on but marbles in the spring probably came to Northern Illinois and our county with the first families that had sons with them. You do know, I am sure that you do not need to be male, nor young, to play!

RING TAW

Marbles are usually 1/2 inch diameter, one used by player called a "taw". No specific number specified for game.

Knuckle of forefinger placed on ground, marble balanced on forefinger with the thumb behind.

Two circles are drawn on ground, the larger about a foot in diameter and the inner about 7 inches. Each player puts one or two marbles in inner circle. Each player shoots in turn from any point outside the outer circle. If player knocks one or more out of the inner circle, he wins those marbles and is also entitled to another shot. This shot is taken from where his taw came to rest when he first shot.

If player fails to knock any marble from the inner circle, his turn ends and he must leave his taw where it stopped. Succeeding players may shoot at any marble within either circle, taws as well as marbles originally placed in inner circle. Whenever a taw is hit, its owner must pay one marble to player who hit it. After his first turn each player shoots his taw from where it came to rest at end of his previous turn. Game ends when all marbles have been cleared from inner circle.

There are many variations: Spangy, for which you must have five players; Increase pound; Fortifications; Bounce eye; Wall marbles; Die Shot; Hundreds; Three holes; Archbound; Picking Plums; Dobblers; and One Step.

CAN YOU IDENTIFY?

ALDEN'S OLDEST RESIDENT.

Meet Jessie Bowdish, who will reach the century mark in May. Still an active lady, who prepares her own meals, and those of the women who stay with her; washes and wipes the dishes; bakes a cherry or blueberry pie every week; is interested in state and national news as well as the local variety; and is living in the house where she was born, with Dr. Munson in attendance.

Jessie Pamelia was the third child of Charles Rollin Andrews and his wife, who had been Hattie Douglas. Both were from New York. Charles had come to Alden to work in the store of his uncle, George Andrews, from Green county and Hattie had come to Waukegan from Oswego. When Charles was twenty he joined the 95th Illinois Regiment, Company C, serving from 1860 until 1863. He came home with a military mien and a long beard he had grown to protect his chest from the eternal colds of the poorly clad, poorly fed soldier. He went back to the store and continued working there through the times of several owners, being postmaster at the store for many, many years. He was one of those who went on the excursion train (in grain cars!) to raise money for the Alden church. Long before this, he had bought the horse and buggy of a minister who was leaving Alden, and used it to go courting Miss Douglas. They were married in 1869.

Jessie attended grade school next door to her home in Alden. Her best friend was Minnie Carroll. When she finished grade school, she attended high school in Hebron for a year, going every day on the KD, leaving at six thirty in the morning and returning at six at night.

When she was fourteen she began sewing for other people, and at nineteen had become what was thought of as professional and went to homes where she made up clothing for the family to last until she could come again next season. She was twenty-four when she married William Bowdish and went to live in Walworth. They had two children, Loraine, born in 1908 and Lawren, in 1911. The daughter died in the influenza epidemic of 1918. Lawren, who created the Badger Marine Company, lives on Route 173 east of Harvard.

When her mother needed her after Mrs. Douglas became bedridden, she came back to Alden, and again, after her Mother's death, when her sister-in-law was left alone. Now the sister-in-law, who is also an old lady, is in a rest home, and Jessie Bowdish lives alone where she was born.

Daddy, Mother, Jessie, Loraine and Lawren

Jessie and Will Bowdish

Age 18

Age 51

Age 99

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CAN YOU IDENTIFY?

Again we are asking help to discover who the four little boys, each with his medal, are. The picture came from effects of Cora M. Lockwood, who taught in the Ridgefield School in 1914.

Can anyone tell us who these charming young ladies are?

McHENRY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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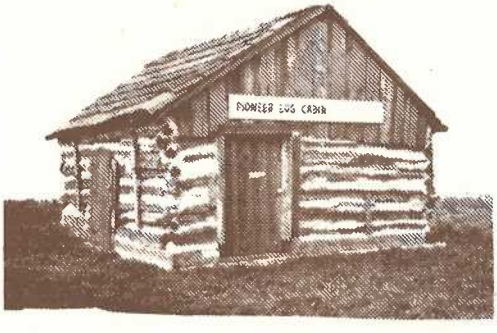

IF YOUR ADDRESS IS INCORRECT,
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